



**NATIONAL FOSTER CARE
MONTH 2023**

OUTREACH TOOLKIT

Communication Tools to Spread the Word
#FosterCareMonth

National Foster Care Month (NFCM) is an initiative of the Children’s Bureau that seeks to increase national awareness of foster care issues. Each May, we take time to recognize the important role that people from all parts of child welfare play in supporting children, youth, and families. This year, join us as we raise awareness about this year’s theme: “Strengthening Minds. Uplifting Families.”

childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth

What's Inside

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Getting Started: Timeline | 4 |
| Key Facts | 5 |
| Social Media | 6 |
| Graphics | 8 |
| Email Signature Block | 11 |
| Sample Messages | 12 |

Introduction

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

The Children's Bureau and its partner, Child Welfare Information Gateway, are pleased to offer this year's outreach toolkit to help you plan your local campaign for National Foster Care Month (NFCM) in May. In this toolkit, you will find a suggested timeline for campaign activities, key facts to include in your messaging, sample social media posts for easy sharing, cover photos for your social media pages, themed graphics, GIFs, and more. Visit the [NFCM website](#) to learn more about this year's theme and find resources for year-round support.

WHY WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

The success of NFCM depends on your efforts to engage your community and raise awareness about the need to invest in the lives of children and youth in foster care.

This year's campaign brings to the forefront support for the mental health needs of children and youth in foster care. [Mental and behavioral health](#) are the largest unmet health needs for children and teens in care. Because managing mental health and wellness is a lifelong journey, child welfare professionals must look for ways to provide early and appropriate interventions for children and youth in care that support their emotional well-being and culture and set them up for future success.

Support for mental health can mean different things to different people, and the lens with which we view mental health services must include a consideration of the culture, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and disability of the recipient to ensure both traditional and nontraditional services are effective. As an essential component of overall health and well-being, we must lift conversations about mental health into everyday case planning and practice.

Every step you take to help spread the word can make a difference. Start planning now!

This National Foster Care Month, join us in showing that a mental health journey can begin at any age. Educating your community and colleagues is one thing everyone can do.

Stay connected to the campaign by [subscribing](#) to email updates and check out what other communities are doing to [raise awareness](#) about this year's NFCM campaign.

If you have any questions, please contact us at NFCM@childwelfare.gov.

Getting Started: Timeline

Mark your calendar!

Consider the following timeline to schedule your planned actions for NFCM and find tools to help with each idea in this outreach toolkit.

March/
April

Visit the [NFCM website](#) to explore this year's updated tools and [resources](#) to learn about the importance of taking a holistic and culturally responsive approach to supporting the mental health of children, youth, and families in foster care. Check out the [events page](#) to plan out your schedule so you won't miss any Children's Bureau events! Also use this page for ideas on how you can take action in your community.

May 1

Today marks the start of NFCM 2023! Update your social media cover images with our [NFCM banners](#) and publish a post from our [sample social media posts](#) (available in English and Spanish) announcing the first day of NFCM 2023. Pair your post with our [graphics](#) and the hashtag **#FosterCareMonth** to join the conversation.

May,
Week 1

Help uplift the conversation around supporting mental health for children and youth in foster care. Consider working with your local government to issue a Foster Care Month [proclamation](#) or get your network involved by sending an email to your mailing lists using our [sample messages](#).

May,
Week 2

Choose from our series of [mental health graphics](#) that focus on different mental health supports. Share these on your social media pages, websites, blogs, newsletters, or any other channel of communication to help raise awareness for NFCM and Mental Health Awareness Month.

May,
Week 3

Read and listen to reflections, advice, and [stories of resilience](#) from children and youth in foster care. Feature their stories in your public awareness campaigns to demonstrate effective trauma-informed practice and supports that prioritize well-being.

May,
Week 4

Keep your colleagues inspired year-round. Download tools like the [Quick Tips graphic](#) to hang in your office or save to your mobile phone so they can be referenced at any time. Refresh your resource collection with information from the [NFCM website](#) that prioritizes holistic and culturally responsive approaches to supporting mental health for children, youth, and families.

Don't stop raising awareness—bookmark the NFCM website so you can utilize our resources and messaging throughout the year!

Key Facts

Include these key points in your messaging to learn how the child welfare field can view mental health services with a lens that includes a consideration of the culture, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and disability of the recipient and take a holistic and culturally responsive approach to supporting the mental health needs of children and youth in foster care. Visit the [NFCM website](#) to find more key facts from this year's campaign.

There are over [391,000 children and youth in foster care](#). [Mental and behavioral health](#) is the largest unmet health need for these children and teens.

[Up to 80 percent of children in foster care have significant mental health needs](#), compared with approximately 18 to 22 percent of the general population.

Because of the complex traumas faced by children and youth in foster care, foster care alumni experienced posttraumatic stress disorder [at a rate nearly five times higher](#) than the general adult population.

[Youth in foster care are prescribed psychotropic medications at a much higher rate](#) (ranging from 13 to 52 percent) than youth in the general population (4 percent).

Investing in culturally appropriate mental health supports that [recognize an individual's identity, culture, and lived experience](#) may improve the effectiveness of services and supports and improve long-term outcomes for children and youth.

To meaningfully address the mental health needs of children, youth, and young adults in foster care [requires a holistic approach](#) that focuses broadly on their well-being within the contexts of home, family, school, work, and community.

[Youth and young adults are experts on their own lives](#). Empowering youth to make informed decisions about the mental health treatment and services they receive, who they receive them from, and when can help young people connect with providers and improve outcomes.

[Maintaining relationships with relatives and kin](#) can increase stability, reduce trauma, and help children maintain a sense of family, belonging, and identity.

Relational permanency is fundamental to the well-being of children and youth in foster care. [Stable, nurturing placements](#) have positive impacts on children and youth's resilience and long-term well-being.

[Effective training and support for foster parents](#) will improve retention, increase placement stability, and increase capacity to help children and youth in care navigate life's challenge.

Social Media

Promote [NFCM](#) by using your social networks to help raise awareness about the ways the child welfare system can acknowledge mental health as an important component of overall health and well-being.

Connect your followers and friends to the NFCM campaign by using the hashtag #FosterCareMonth. Follow Child Welfare Information Gateway and the Children's Bureau for easy-to-share NFCM posts.

TWITTER: [@Childwelfaregov](#)

FACEBOOK:

www.facebook.com/childwelfare

www.facebook.com/thechildrensbureau

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

The following are sample social media posts to help you spread the word:

May is National Foster Care Month! Join us in working to help children and youth exit care with strengthened minds, holistic supports, and stable families. #FosterCareMonth
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/>

It's National #FosterCareMonth! Help raise awareness about the importance of conversations with children, youth, and their caregivers about their mental health needs while they are engaged with the foster care system. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/>

Translation: ¡Es el Mes Nacional del Cuidado de Crianza! Ayuda a crear conciencia sobre la importancia de las conversaciones con los niños, jóvenes y proveedores de cuidado sobre sus necesidades de salud mental mientras participan en el sistema de cuidado de crianza. #FosterCareMonth <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/> (en inglés)

Mental health is an essential component of overall health and well-being. Join National #FosterCareMonth in recognizing the importance of prioritizing conversations about mental health to support children, youth, and caregivers. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/>

Translation: La salud mental es un componente esencial de la salud y el bienestar general. Únete al Mes Nacional del Cuidado de Crianza para reconocer la importancia de priorizar las conversaciones sobre salud mental para apoyar a los niños, jóvenes y proveedores de cuidado. #FosterCareMonth <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/> (en inglés)

Culture, identity, and lived experience must always be a part of the conversation about mental health and finding the right care. Learn more during #FosterCareMonth. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/resources/>

Translation: La cultura, la identidad y la experiencia vivida siempre deben ser parte de la conversación sobre la salud mental y la búsqueda de la atención adecuada. Obtén más información durante el Mes Nacional del Cuidado de Crianza. #FosterCareMonth <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/resources/> (en inglés)

There are over 391,000 children and youth in foster care and about 80 percent have significant mental health needs due to complex traumas from entering foster care. Learn about the importance of #StrengtheningMinds during #FosterCareMonth. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/>

National #FosterCareMonth raises awareness about the mental health needs of children and youth in foster care and how the #childwelfare field can holistically support youth of all ages. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/>

Everyone has a role to play in helping children and youth exit care with strengthened minds, holistic supports, and stable families. #FosterCareMonth <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/>

Engage youth in seeking ways to nurture their mental health. Ask what types of support they need—including traditional and nontraditional options. Find resources on the #FosterCareMonth website. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/resources/youthhealth/>

Mental health is a journey that can start at any age. Listen to youth and families tell their stories about their experiences with mental health while in foster care. #FosterCareMonth. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/stories/>

Graphics

Grab attention with these free NFCM graphics.

Add them to your social media pages, websites, Zoom or Teams backgrounds, newsletters, emails, and other print or digital communications. To download them, click the link below each image or download it from the [website](#).

GIF



[Share the GIF](#) (600 x 600px)

COVER PHOTOS



[Download Facebook Cover Photo](#) (830 x 312px)

[Download Twitter Cover Photo](#) (1500 x 500px)

THEMED GRAPHICS



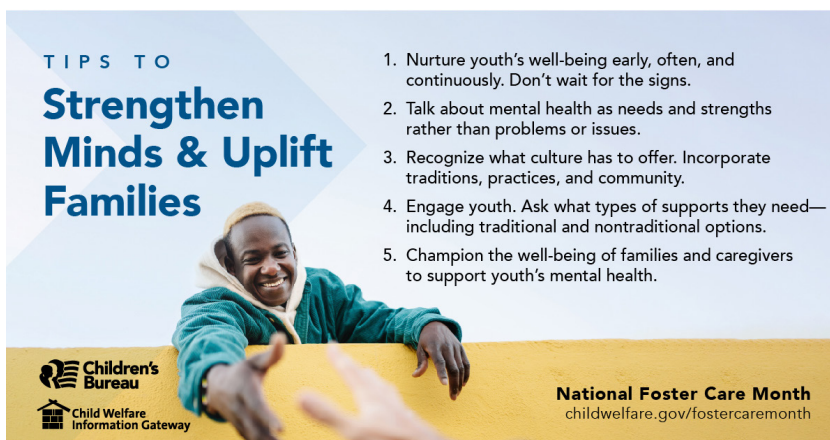
[Download](#) (1200 x 628px)

[Download Square Image](#) (1080 x 1080)



[Download](#) (1200 x 628px)

[Download Square Image](#) (1080 x 1080)



[Download](#) (1200 x 628px)

MENTAL HEALTH GRAPHICS



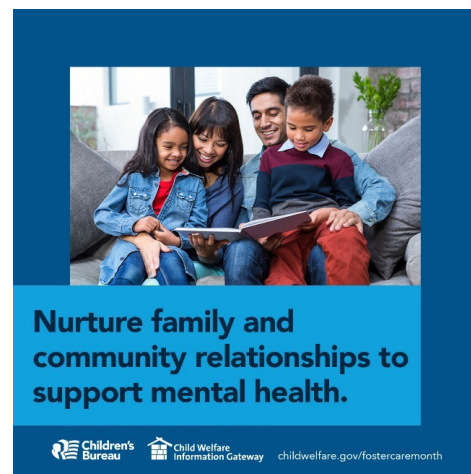
[Download Square Image](#) (1080 x 1080)



[Download Square Image](#) (1080 x 1080)



[Download Square Image](#) (1080 x 1080)



[Download Square Image](#) (1080 x 1080)

VIRTUAL MEETING BACKGROUND



[Download](#) (1920 x 1080px)

Email Signature Block

Add an NFCM signature block to every email you send to help raise awareness about this year's theme, "Strengthening Minds. Uplifting Families."

To add a graphic to your email signature, access the image from the [website](#) to copy and paste it directly into your signature block.



Sample Messages

Share these sample messages with colleagues, media contacts, policymakers, families, and others interested in foster care to help raise awareness about the importance of taking a holistic and culturally responsive approach to supporting the mental health needs of those involved with child welfare. You can modify the content to fit your newsletters, websites, press releases, talking points, or other products.

MESSAGE #1

Subject: Help Raise Awareness! May Is National Foster Care Month.

Mental and behavioral health is the largest unmet need for children and teens in foster care.

This year, National Foster Care Month will help raise awareness about the importance of prioritizing mental health. This year's theme, "Strengthening Minds. Uplifting Families," emphasizes how it is essential to create a child welfare system that takes a holistic and culturally responsive approach to supporting the mental health needs of our nation's diverse populations.

Visit the [website](#) to learn more about National Foster Care Month and to find tools, resources, and outreach materials to help get your networks involved!

- Share [stories](#) from foster care to highlight the importance of having access to mental health care.
- Help educate the public about the mental health needs of children and youth in foster care by sharing information and [resources](#).
- Use our sample [social media posts](#) and pair them with the hashtag #FosterCareMonth to join in the conversation.
- Incorporate free [graphics](#) on your social media pages, website, blogs, and newsletters to show your support

Stay connected throughout the month of May by following #FosterCareMonth on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

MESSAGE #2

Subject: Strengthening Minds. Uplifting Families – May is National Foster Care Month!

There are [over 391,000 children and youth in foster care](#) across the country, and about [80 percent have significant mental health needs](#) due to complex traumas from entering foster care.

This year, [National Foster Care Month](#) will help raise awareness about the importance of prioritizing mental health because it is an essential component to overall health and well-being.

Support for mental health can mean different things to different people, and the lens with which we access mental health services must include a consideration of the culture, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and disability of the recipient to ensure services are effective.

Use the National Foster Care Month [resource collection](#) to help talk with children, youth, and their caregivers about their mental health needs while they are engaged with the foster care system.

Learn how to incorporate conversations about mental health into everyday case planning and see how a holistic approach to mental health care can support permanency and help youth leave care with strengthened minds, holistic supports, and stable families.

Stay connected to the conversation throughout the month of May by following [#FosterCareMonth](#) on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

STAY CONNECTED

Recognizing National Foster Care Month is an important part of keeping the needs of children and youth in foster care in the minds of the public.

Follow us on social media to find out about new resources, and check out our free [subscription](#) for year-round information.

TWITTER: [@Childwelfaregov](#)

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/childwelfare
www.facebook.com/thechildrensbureau

If you have a few minutes, please help us improve next year's campaign.

TAKE THE SURVEY!



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

